viz media

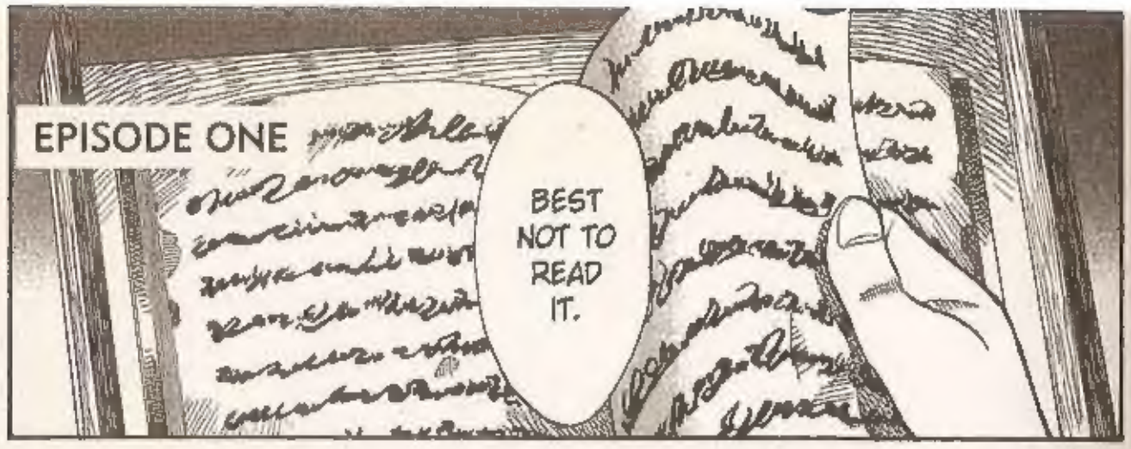
R.O.D

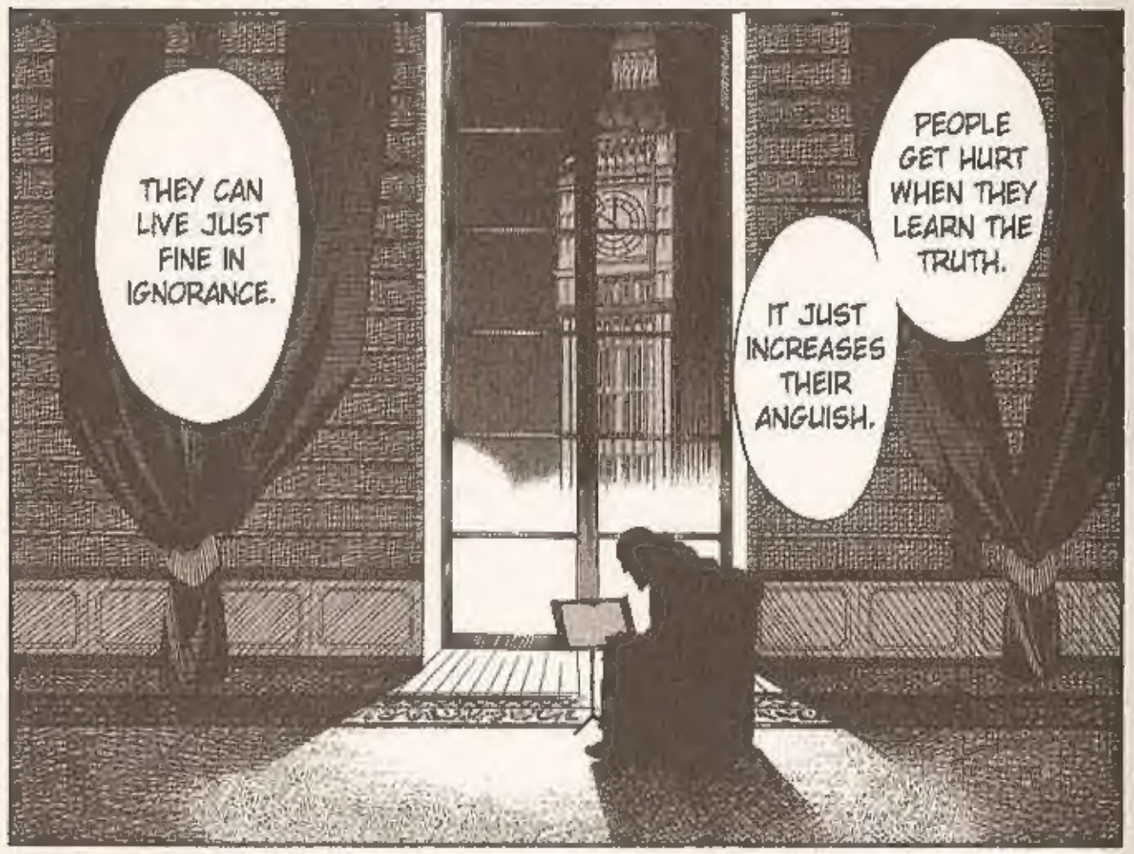
READ OR DIE

KEEP OUT KEEP OUT KEEP OUT

R.O.D

READ OR DIE





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...

HOW DEEP ARE THE LIES?

AAAH ♡

DONNIE, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU ALREADY READ IT.

HEY, DONNIE!

HUH?

!

CAN IT...

I THINK YOU'LL LIKE IT.

IT'S A WONDERFUL STORY.

WRITTEN BY A GIRL WHAT IS VALUED HER.

IS IT YOU, DONNIE?

CAN IT BE?

...IN THE WORLD?

IS THIS PAPER THE ONLY TRUE THING...

IF THEY DON'T KNOW THE TRUTH, THEY CAN DIE IN PEACE...

A LETTER!

FROM DONNIE!

EPISODE ONE

NO MORE LIES !!

FSH

!

NO!
NEVER!

BUT
NOT
US.

OTHER
PEOPLE
WOULD.

OTHER
THINGS
WOULD.

DONNIE
!!

WITH-
OUT
BOOKS
...

WITHOUT
BELIEVING
IN PAPER,
HOW
COULD WE
LIVE?

WE'RE
BIBLIO-
PHILES.

WE'RE
PAPER
MASTERS.

WILL IT
TEAR OPEN
ANOTHER
WOUND,
YOMIKO?

BELIEVE
OR
BETRAY.

YOU DON'T
NEED TO
READ IT.
YOU DON'T
NEED TO
KNOW.

PEOPLE
CAN LIVE
WITHOUT
BOOKS.

IT'S JUST
ANOTHER
TRAP!!

PIK

AAAH...

AH...

YOU'VE
GIVEN
UP ON
BOOKS.

YOU'VE
DONE IT.

I DON'T LIKE TO USE LETHAL FORCE.

JUST RUBBER AND KNOCKOUT BULLETS.

CHK

CHK

DON'T WORRY. THEY'RE NOT REAL BULLETS.

I'LL PROTECT YOU.

DON'T WORRY.

AHH

...

READ IT, YOMIKO.

DONNIE ...

SE

DON'T SHOOT!

AAAUGH!

PSH

PSH

KA-RO-MO

BAM

BAM

EEEK!!

IF THEY HAVE, WE CAN ESCAPE.

D'YOU THINK THEY'VE GIVEN UP?

CHF CHF

WE'RE DEAD MEAT IF WE STAY HERE.

YEAH! WE SHOULD HURRY!

THEY STILL HAVEN'T ATTACKED.

!!!

KRASH

YOMIKO ...

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, I WILL ALREADY BE DEAD.

THIS IS MY SECOND LETTER TO YOU.

PLIP

...AND THEY HAVE ELIMINATED ME.

I HAVE DISOBEYED THE ORDERS OF THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND...

I EXAMINED ALL POSSIBLE MEANS OF SUBDUING IT, BUT CONCLUDED THAT MANKIND DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER TO CONTROL IT.

THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY IS AN ENTITY BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION.

BU

AA

CHK

ARRGH!

AUGH!

THE "B" STUDENTS MAKE GOOD TARGETS! HA HA!

GO AHEAD! GIVE IT A SHOT!

SHU

WHY?

WHY ME?

YOU *MUST* DO IT.

YOU CAN. YOU'RE THE ONLY WHO CAN DO IT.

...

!

YOMIKO, DO YOU REMEMBER THE QUESTION I ONCE ASKED YOU?

THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY SHOULD BE LEFT TO ROT WHERE IT IS: UNDER-GROUND.

IT SHOULD NEVER BE HANDED OVER TO THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND OR ANYONE.

IF, FOR SOME REASON, IT RISES ABOVE GROUND ...

...YOU MUST STOP IT, YOMIKO.

BUT... I CAN'T.

MY PAPER POWERS ARE GONE.

I'M COMPLETELY POWERLESS !!

WE CAN SAVE BOTH.

BOTH?

WE MUST DO ALL IN OUR POWER TO SAVE BOTH THE PERSON AND THE BOOK.

WE ARE PAPER AND PERSON. IT IS OUR FATE AS PAPER MASTERS.

IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SAVING THE LAST BOOK IN THE WORLD OR A DROWNING PERSON, WHICH WOULD YOU SAVE?

...

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF. THE USUAL ANSWER IS TO SAVE THE PERSON.

BUT NOT FOR US. WE AREN'T NORMAL PEOPLE.

READ OR DIE

DIE !!!

READ !!!

NO HUMAN LIVES MUST BE LOST TO THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY.

THE WISDOM PASSED DOWN FROM THE AGES MUST NOT BE USED AS A WEAPON.

AS A BIBLIOPHILE, AS A PAPER MASTER...

...AS THE WOMAN IN THE WORLD MOST LOVED BY PAPER...

...EVEN IF YOUR FATE HAS BECOME A BURDEN...

...EVEN IF YOU'VE FALLEN INTO DOUBT...

...YOU MUST CHOOSE.

WE BELIEVE IN PEOPLE... AND IN PAPER.

BOOKS ARE BORN OF PEOPLE AND PAPER.

YOU, MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD, HAVE THE POWER TO BELIEVE.

YOU KNO L OF ME

DONNIE.

I WANT TO JUST DROP IT AND RUN AWAY.

AND YET... LOOKING AT THIS BOOK EXCITES ME.

...AND YOU MAKE ME FEEL EVEN WORSE.

IT'S NOT FAIR. I FINALLY HEAR FROM YOU...

BUT...

...I'LL DIE IF I DON'T READ IT!

AAAAH!

!!!

NO

JUMP

HEY, THIS LITTLE ONE'S STILL STANDING!

THAT-

UGH

UGH.

NENENE!

BUMMER.

GRR

BU...

THEY'RE THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU?

YOU BETTER TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT. IT'S THE FIRST AUTOGRAPH I'VE EVER GIVEN.

I DON'T BELONG TO ANYBODY! I BELONG TO MYSELF!!!

TEACHER!

TEACHER !!!

B !!! AM

MY NAME IS NENENE. NENENE SUMI-REGAWA !!

YOU DID A LOT OF STUFF WITH PAPER. WHAT WAS THAT?

YOU KNOW ALL OF

I THINK NOT.

!!!

TRY STOPPING *THIS!*

SHU!

DRAKE!

...NOT HUMAN!

SHE'S...

Up

Up

Up

Up

THAT'S ENOUGH !!

WAAAH !!

YOU ASKED FOR IT.

GYAA!

KLK

REAL BULLETS.

STOP RIGHT THERE !!!

POK

POK

POK

POK

BOOM

WHAT WAS THAT?

!?

WAAA!!

HELP !!!

SOME-BODY...

SOME-BODY HELP...

SOME-BODY...

SOME-BODY...

CHAK

DM DM DM

FINALLY.

YOMIKO.

SLK

WIP

REEN

VOOM

SORRY I'M LATE.

GRP

YOU'RE TOO LATE.

HAVE YOU COME TO SAVE THE "B" STUDENTS?

YOMIKO!

NO.

!!

TEACHER !!!

ZAM

EPISODE TWO

VOOM

GEEZ, SHE JUST WON'T QUIT.

WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE?

SLAM

OUCH...

SHF

SHK

ZT ZT ZT ZT

!

I'LL SAVE EVERYONE AT THIS SCHOOL.

THE "A" STUDENTS, TOO... AND THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY.

NOT JUST THE "B" STUDENTS.

NOW, EVERY-ONE!

LISTEN TO YOUR TEACHER!

EPISODE TWO

WHATEVER IT IS...

...I'D BETTER GET OUT THERE.

YOMI...

SHUFF

UGH!

THAP

AGH!

EVERY-ONE!

GRP

...

HAH

YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO *HELP?*

THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU'LL SAVE US POOR STUDENTS?

BWASH

DID YOU HEAR THAT? A MEASLY TEACHER OF MEASLY "B" STUDENTS!

HA HA

WE DON'T NEED ANY HELP FROM YOU!!

ACTIONS LIKE THOSE ...

...CANNOT LEAD TO A NEW WORLD!

HUH...

UMM...

YOU WANT TO BE STRONGER? FINE.

THAT'S A NOBLE AMBITION.

BUT IT DOESN'T JUSTIFY ...

...HURTING OTHERS OR DEVELOPING DARK POWERS.

YOU'RE BEING DECEIVED.

...WITH THOSE EYES?

WHY'S SHE LOOKING AT ME ...

LOOK! THEY'RE ...

"A" STUDENTS! GET HER!!

AAAUGH!

TEACHER ...

DON'T LISTEN TO HER!

WHOA ...

CHOKING

YOU WON'T STAND IN OUR WAY!

YOU'RE OUR ENEMY!

THOSE EYES...

HUH?

CLOMP

ARRGH!

GET BACK !!!

DRAKE !!!

WOOSH

ARRGH!

NICE TO HAVE YOU BACK, YOMIKO

NOW BACK TO OUR MISSION.

WO

SAY YOU'RE SORRY !!

OMA

TK TK TK

HEY!

CRUSH HER!!!

!

THAK

GRIN

...AND TEACHER !!!

STUDENTS ...

WE'LL FIGHT TOGETHER!

GOON

HISS...

YEAH.

ZZP

ZZP

STAND FIRM!

DON'T BACK DOWN! OUR POWER IS GREATER THAN NUMBERS!

WE HAVE THE STRENGTH.

WE HAVE THE POWER.

EVERYONE! STAND AND FIGHT!!!

SUMI-REGAWA ...

YOU'VE LET THAT WOMAN AFFECT YOU.

AM I WRONG?

BECAUSE YOU HAVE DOUBT.

WE'RE THE ONES WITH AWAKENED POWERS. HOW CAN THEY BE BEATING US?

THEY'RE JUST "B" STUDENTS! HOW CAN THEY...

AAA

OH, NO!

GRRRM

UGH.

YOU'VE BEEN WAITING LONG ENOUGH.

DO DO DO

AH, YES.

YOU WANT... *HER!*

I LOVE IT.

GO AHEAD... GET ME RILED.

AS TEACHER SAYS, SHE'S "SPECIAL."

IT'S TIME TO AROUSE THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY.

I WOULD N-NEVER ...

N-NO! NO!

YOU DOUBT OUR TEACHER.

...ARE USELESS.

WEAK STUDENTS ...

TNK

NNG...

NNG! RRGH!

TNK

!

SSS

SHK

SHK

M-MISTER!

TOK

THAT'S RIGHT.

THAT'S THE WAY.

HEH HEH...

AND I'M GONNA BEAT THE LIVING CRAP OUT OF *YOU*.

THAT'S RIGHT.

IN THE END, IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME.

A WEAK PERSON IS NOTHING MORE THAN CRAP.

GRP

CHUGG

WHOA!

SWA

HA HA HA!

WHAT THE...

"B" CLASS WILL ALWAYS BE "B" CLASS.

POWER-LESS WEAK-LINGS.

CAN'T DO ANY-THING ALONE.

I'M THE TEACHER'S PET!

GIVE THE TEACHER A HARD TIME AND I'LL...

...HUNT YOU DOWN !!!

LET'S GET GOING.

YOU'LL REGRET THIS, HARADA

THAT SO?

AYAAA !!

WIMPY KAZUTO!

KRAK

SHUT UP, WIMP !!

NEVER CALL ME THAT!!

!

I NEED TO DO IT.

THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S ME.

HARADA !!

HE'S ALL YOURS.

TEACH HIM A LESSON.

FOOH

WATCH OUT!!

YOMIKO!

CRA

AAAAAH !!!

SH

I WILL FULFILL MY TEACHER'S DESIRE.

I WILL AWAKEN THE UNDER-GROUND LIBRARY.

WHATEVER YOU DO, WHOEVER YOU SAVE, IT'S ALL THE SAME.

I GUESS.

HUH? WERE YOU JUST SETTLING OLD SCORES?

DEFEAT-ED...

WHAT ?

HUNT THEM DOWN! GET RID OF THEM!

ARE YOU CRAZY ?

YOU'RE NOT DONE! FINISH THEM OFF!

...BY "B" STUDENTS.

...

STUDENTS HERE.

...WE'RE ALL STILL ...

WHAT-EVER WE'RE FIGHTING ABOUT...

WOOSH

!!!

UGH ...

UGH ...

THE IGNORANCE OF PEOPLE WHO WON'T LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE MAKES ME SICK.

SORRY FOR THE DELAY. YOU'RE NEXT.

HMM...I MAY HAVE TO WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.

THWUMP

AAAGH !!!

GROWL

IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR FRIEND WANTS SOME MORE.

YOUR ROLE HAS COME TO AN END...

TAKE YOUR BOWS AND HEAD OFF-STAGE.

BOOM

NOW...

...YOMIKO READMAN.

...DIE!

BH

WHAT UNITS DO YOU USE TO MEASURE *THAT?*

SPIRIT!

!!!

WHEN WE WERE KIDS, I ALWAYS WONDERED ...

...WHY I WASN'T SMART LIKE YOU.

KAZUTO ...

...YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD SMARTS.

SPIRIT. THAT'S ALL I EVER HAD.

SHF...

I DID.

I ENVIED YOU.

IS HE REALLY A FRIEND OF MINE? ...

SOUK

KRRK

KAZUTO, YOU SOUND SO...

... LONELY.

HMPH.

HUFF ...

BRR BRR ...

HOW DO YOU MEASURE *THIS?*

YOUR HIT POINTS HAVE ALL RUN DOWN TO ZERO!

YOU CAN TALK, BUT YOU'VE STILL...

...LOST !!!

MUSCLES! REACTION SPEED! LUNG CAPACITY! STAMINA!

GW

GRIP!

KYAAA !!!

AAAAGH !!!

EVEN A DOPE LIKE ME CAN SEE THROUGH YOU.

YOUR CHANCES OF ESCAPING ARE...

PSH

IT'S TOO LATE NOW!

I'LL GET YOU! YOU! YOU! YOU!

NOT ANOTHER WORD OUT OF YOU!

SHUT... UP!!!

TP !!! RT

KAZUTO

SS

SS

HARADA

JUST CALL ME, AND I'LL COME HELP YOU.

BUT IF YOU MOVE AWAY...

YUP, ALWAYS FRIENDS.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY.

I CAN'T BE THERE ALL THE TIME

BUT WE'RE FRIENDS.

HEY, DUMMY ...

NEXT TIME WE MEET, I'LL BE STRONG LIKE YOU.

THOSE EYES !!

...YOU'RE GOOD JUST THE WAY YOU ARE.

BUT THINGS CHANGED.

I WANTED TO BELIEVE YOU.

YOUR EYES, YOUR WORDS.

THAT'S HOW IT WAS.

I SEE NOW.

...

...ZERO !!!

DON'T CRY, KAZUTO.

DK
DK
DK
EEK!
WIF
WIF
THIS POWER...
IT'S SO PURE!!
THOUGHT TRANS-MITTED STRAIGHT TO POWER.
THAT'S WHY IT'S SO ...
EPISODE THR
YOU CAN DO IT... TOGETHER ...
IT'S SO FAR AWAY NOW ...
SO FAR FROM HERE.
YOU CAN GO BACK.

...DANGER-OUS!

THIS FIGHT IS GOING TO BE...

...STRONG!!

ALWAYS THE TEACH-ER.

SHAKE SHAKE

WENDY! TAKE THE STUDENTS SOMEPLACE SAFE!

WE TOLD YOU ALREADY WE'RE NOT GOING TO RUN.

EVERY-ONE!

WE'LL STAY WITH YOU TO THE END.

WE'LL TAKE ON THE "A" STUDENTS!

FIGHT, TEACHER!

THAT'S RIGHT! WE'RE BEHIND YOU, TEACHER!!

EPISODE THREE

DA DA

WHAT'S THAT?

OH!

!!?

!!!

KA RI

M

SHU SHU

TEACHER !!

DOO

M

A PATH ?

IT'S A PATH!

YOU WON'T GET AWAY.

ALL RIGHT, I...

WENDY, PLEASE CALM DOWN.

ROGER.

KK

K

CHAK

...

THANK YOU.

--

--NDY.

TEACH-ER..

THIS IS JOKER. CAN YOU HEAR ME, WENDY?

!

IT'S A COUP D'ETAT!

THE MISSION TEAM'S IN TROUBLE!

MR. JOKER!

WHAT'S HAPPENING ?

SH

IN

G

JOKER, WE NEED REINFORCE-MENTS RIGHT AWAY!

I SEE ...

YOMIKO'S IN A DESPERATE BATTLE.

AAA

IS IT ...

!

BOOM

DONG DONG DONG

DONG

GET READY.

IT'S YOUR TURN.

IS IT ASKING ME TO GO INSIDE?

SAVE THE STUDENTS, SUBDUE THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY AND STOP MY TEACHER?

YOU WANT TOO MUCH.

I, ON THE OTHER HAND...

...WANT ONLY ONE THING. MY TEACHER.

ALL I WANT IS TO HELP MY TEACHER.

YOU WON'T STOP ME.

AND HOW WILL YOU DO THAT?

ZA

H... HELP ...

...ME...

!!!

HELP ...

TEACH-ER...

SHA

SHA

WH-WHITE-NESS ...

...INSIDE MY HEAD... FADING ...

HANG ON !!!

DON'T WORRY. I'LL HELP YOU.

I WILL ...

T-TEACHER.. SOME-THING'S ...

...AND WE ALL HELP ONE ANOTHER.

BUT WE'RE A TEAM...

DRAKE!

KAK

ONE PERSON CAN'T DO IT ALONE, BUT A TEAM CAN DO IT ALL!

WENDY!

DAK

YES, SIR!

WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE STUDENTS.

YOMIKO! GO!!

SHA

WM P

!?

THE WHOLE GANG ...

IRAKA'S RIGHT!

YOMIKO CAN'T SAVE US ALL.

WHAT'RE YOU WAITING FOR?

DRAKE!

WENDY!

DMD

DMD

DMD

...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, IRAKA?

WE'RE SO CLOSE NOW.

DMD

DMD

DMD

DMD

WAIT!

SHE'LL DO IT.

I HOPE SHE CAN HANG IN UNTIL THE END.

DO IT, YOMIKO!

YEAH ...

THAT'D HELP...

JOKER WILL SEND REINFORCE-MENTS.

DOOM

...BUT WE'VE STILL GOT OUR HANDS FULL.

...YOU MUST STAY ALERT OR IT'LL SUCK YOUR MIND IN.

AHH... THIS CLOSE TO THE CORE...

BAM DIN

DONNIE'S NOT HERE.

DONNIE ...

JUST A LITTLE... A LITTLE MORE...

...AND WE WILL MEET AGAIN.

NO. THERE ARE ONLY TWO PEOPLE HERE.

HE *IS* HERE. HIS SPIRIT IS WAITING FOR RETRIBUTION.

...AND A WOMAN LEFT BEHIND.

A MADMAN UNHINGED BY REVENGE ...

THE BOOK OF TRUTH IS HERE.

HMM.

HEE HEE.

HOW DARE YOU?

DONNIE WOULDN'T HAVE WANTED THIS.

RIDLEY, JUST THINK ABOUT IT!

PER-FECT!

HOW DARE YOU SPEAK HIS NAME? HOW COULD YOU KNOW WHAT DONNIE WANTS?

RIDLEY!

YES, YOUR TIMING IS PERFECT.

IT'S THE PERFECT TIME AND PLACE FOR YOU TO DIE.

!!

TAKE *THIS!*

QUIET !!

ISN'T THAT SO, RIDLEY?

YOMIKO...

YOU WON'T BE USING THAT ARM.

VOOM

DID YOU DO SOMETHING WRONG?

YES.

IRAKA, HE'S LYING TO YOU.

THAT IS NOT THE TEACHER YOU KNOW...

TEACHER, PLEASE EXCUSE ME.

WAAA

SHAK

!!!

KK K

AGH!

YES.

GO, THEN.

!!

NNNF !!!

YOMIKO !!!

SHOOM

LOVELY IRAKA.

CLEVER IRAKA.

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST DO.

FWP

!?

SHF

SHUSH!

YES, SIR.

...WE NEED HER TO GET THE BOOK OF TRUTH.

IRAKA...

BUT BEFORE THAT, WE'VE GOT TO GET IT TO OPEN UP.

DOOM

DOOM

WE MUST FEED IT MORE... MUCH MORE.

IT NEEDS THE SEED OF KNOWLEDGE FOR THE COMING SUPERIOR RACE.

YES, SIR.

IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE THAT SEED, NONE OF THIS WOULD'VE BEEN POSSIBLE.

YES, SIR.

SHA

SHA A AAA

A

A

A

A

DOOM

THE PLEASURE IS DRIVING ME MAD.

ALL MY DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE.

SH

ZZK ZZK

HAA.

HMH

BEST FOR YOU TO JUST SHUT UP AND WATCH.

AAAA

AH.

REVENGE WILL BE METED OUT BY THE SWORD!

EVERYONE WILL PAY FOR WARPING US!

SHI NG

I'LL USE THAT POWER T TAKE MY REVENGE

THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND !!

GENTLE-MAN!!

!!

DM

DM

DM

DM

THE ACHING FETAL MOVEMENTS OF WISDOM.

YOU FEEL IT, DON'T YOU, YOMIKO?

NO ONE CAN STOP THEM!!

THEY WON'T STOP!

THAT'S RIGHT! I'LL BE MORE THAN HUMAN!

THIS WISDOM HAS NO HUMAN SOURCE!

IRAKA !!

ZM..

!!

...

DAMN.

!!!

DONNIE N

SNP

YOU!! YOU'VE WEAKENED THE PAPER'S POWER WITH BLOOD FROM YOUR MOUTH!

SHAP

IRAKA !!!

HE'S LYING TO YOU! COME BACK!

THAT'S NOT THE TEACHER YOU LOVED! IT'S RIDLEY WAN!

EPISODE FOUR

BOOM

KRAK

OOO!

B-BDMD

B-BDMD

B-BDMD

BDMD

EPISODE FOUR

YOU'RE CRAZY!

SHE

RUN IF YOU WANT!

WHAT DO WE DO?

...TO THE END.

WE'RE STAYING ...

IS SHE DEAD ?

IF SO, WE'D BETTER START RUNNING!

!?

KA-K LUNK

D

!

WHAT'S HAPPENING OVER THERE?

IT'S STOPPED ...

...?

IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, NENENI SUMI-REGAWA.

KRA

HI P

WHO ARE YOU?

AREN'T YOU HERE TO HELP US?

NOD

THAT ONE'S NOT TO BE HARMED.

!

SHE'S A TALENTED WRITER.

DROOM

HOSH

106

DA-D

OOM

GRAB

FSSH

FSSH

FSSH

FSSH

HOW

BRR

BRR

WHOA...

SH

I...
IRAKA...

AAA

LOOK WHO'S TALKING !!!

I SAW HOW YOUR EYES LIT UP WHEN YOU SAW THIS!!!

SHAME-LESS BOOK SLUT!

SUCH CHEAP DESIRE !!

YOU'RE DROOLING FOR IT! YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE READY TO FLY RIGHT OVER HERE!

THIS BOOK WILL ONLY OPEN ITS PAGES... ITS HEART... TO ONE WITH A LOVE OF BOOKS AS STRONG AS YOURS.

BUT I NEED YOU.

HA HA! I'LL BE BOTH ...

...WHEN I TAKE MY REVENGE ON GENTLE-MAN!

IRAKA ...

HA HA HA!

DID YOU WANT THE BOOK THAT MUCH?

GOT IT! IT'S MINE! MINE!

NOW I CAN BE A GOD OR A DEVIL!

THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY MUST BE LEFT TO ROT UNDERGROUND WHERE IT BELONGS.

DONNIE SAYS SO.

HURTING?

YOU MUST STOP HURTING THE BOOK.

THE BOOK, THE STUDENTS ...

...IRAKA. YOU'RE MAKING THEM SUFFER.

THAT'S NOT WHAT DONNIE WOULD WANT.

YOU'RE SO FULL OF HATRED THAT YOU THINK CRIES OF PAIN ARE SOUNDS OF PLEASURE.

THAT'S RIGHT!

FWA

SHUT UP !!!

WELL...

YOU WANT TO READ IT, DON'T YOU?

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

GRR

...

RIDLEY... PUT THE BOOK BACK.

!

IT WANTS TO BE HELD BY YOU, FOREVER, IN YOUR ARMS.

BOOM

I HAVE TO SAVE YOU!

B-DMP

B-DMP

B-DMP

B-DMP

WHO KILLED DONNIE?

WHO TOOK FROM ME THE ONE THING IN THIS WORLD I COULD TRUST?

LOOK WHO'S TALKING!

HA-HA-HA-

JIN

...I'LL MAKE YOU READ IT!

JIN

JIN

SHING

BA

...

WELL, THEN... TRY!

RAF

SHAA

SU

EVEN IF I HAVE TO STICK YOU ON A WALL AND CUT OFF YOUR EYELIDS...

HUH

SLRP

I SEE.

SO...

THERE'S NOT MUCH MORE TO SAY.

OUR POWERS ARE EVENLY MATCHED.

IF WE KEEP FIGHTING LIKE THIS, WE'LL BOTH BURN OUT.

KA

SHOO

...LOSE!

HA HA HAAAA !!!!

THEY'RE PROOF THAT WE ONCE LAUGHED, CRIED AND LIVED TOGETHER AS FRIENDS.

IN THESE SCARS ARE MEMORIES OF DONNIE.

DONNIE'S IN MY SCARS!

CAN YOU SEE HIM, YOMIKO?

ME...

...OR YOU.

KYA

THE SURVIVOR CAN REWRITE THE BOOK OF TRUTH AND CHANGE THE WORLD...

...TO SUIT THEIR PLEASURE.

...LET'S DECIDE OUR FATE IN ONE FELL STROKE.

...THERE'S NO WAY FOR YOU TO...

RIDLEY...

CHK

!

BUT NOT FOR US. WE ARE NOT NORMAL PEOPLE.

DONNIE NA

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF. THE USUAL ANSWER IS TO SAVE THE PERSON.

IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SAVING THE LAST BOOK IN THE WORLD OR A DROWNING PERSON, WHICH WOULD YOU SAVE?

YES. WE MUST DO ALL IN OUR POWER TO SAVE BOTH THE PERSON *AND* THE BOOK.

WE ARE PAPER AND PERSON.

WSSH

WO

YO-MIKO!

IT ENDS NOW !!!

YOMIKO ...

WHY?

FOOL !!

DONNIE ?

!!

DONNIE NAKAJIMA

I CHOSE.

!!

IN EVERYTHING HE STOOD FOR, EVEN HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH YOU.

I CHOSE TO BELIEVE IN DONNIE.

IT IS OUR FATE AS PAPER MASTERS.

IDIOT !!!

I DID IT ALL...

ALL FOR HIM!

IT'S OVER NOW, RIDLEY.

HUFF

HUFF HUFF

NA

ISN'T THAT SO, DONNIE?

BELIEVE !!!

BELIEF IS STRONGER THAN ANYTHING.

I WIN!

I, TOO, MUST FULFILL DONNIE'S ...

...DYING WISH!!!

KR IN

HA HA HA !!!

CH

THE PAPER!

THAT'S MY...

...HE'S MY...

IRAKA...

!!!

KOOSH

AAAGH!

EPISODE FIVE

PUK

UGH!

LONG TIME NO SEE, RIDLEY.

YOU BAS-TARD!

RIDLEY !!!

AH...OF COURSE THE BOOK OF TRUTH WOULD BE HEAVY.

IT'S THE WEIGHT OF ALL HUMAN HISTORY.

SHUK

I DECLARE THAT WE *ARE* THE WINNERS.

JOKER!

JOKER !!

YES, EVERYONE.

WE HAVE REACHED THE CLIMAX OF THE STORY.

THEY WROTE DOWN ALL THEY LEARNED IN TWO VOLUMES.

AS CENTURY AFTER CENTURY PASSED, THEY GATHERED MUCH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HUMAN EXISTENCE.

DEITIES!

DEMONS!

AT TIMES BENEVOLENT GODS, AT TIMES MALICIOUS DEVILS, THEY PLAYED A PART IN EVERY TWIST AND TURN OF HISTORY.

THE SOURCE OF THEIR POWER, TOO, THEY RECORDED IN THOSE TWO VOLUMES.

FROM THAT DAY TO THIS, THE DEITIES HAVE BEEN INVISIBLE TO HUMANS. THEIR BOOKS DISAPPEARED FROM HISTORY.

THEN, ONE DAY, THEY PARTED.

FAR IN THE DISTANT PAST, A MAN AND A WOMAN SHOT ACROSS THE SEA OF STARS AND LANDED ON EARTH.

THEY DECIDED TO STAY AND LIVE ON THIS PLANET.

THE BOOK OF TRUTH IS SAID TO RELEASE THE LATENT POWERS OF HUMAN BEINGS ALL PEOPLE COULD LIVE AS EQUALS FOR ALL ETERNITY.

EPISODE FIVE

PLEASE LET THEM LIE TOGETHER IN THE EARTH.

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN GAIN FROM THE BOOK OF TRUTH AND THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY.

BUT IT WOULD BE BEST FOR THE WORLD.

NOW, *THAT* WOULDN'T SERVE ENGLAND VERY WELL.

I SEE.

DONNIE WANTS IT THAT WAY.

SHF

THEN I GUESS I HAVE NO CHOICE.

THEN YOU'LL ...

...OF THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN BEASTS AND HUMANS.

THIS IS ONE HALF...

THE BOOK OF TRUTH IS ONE OF THEM.

MR. JOKER !!

LET ME PUT IT BACK!

I BEG YOU!

MR. JOKER!

YOU ARE TRULY SUPERB.

YOU NOT ONLY FOUND THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY, BUT YOU UNCOVERED THE BOOK OF TRUTH.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINE WORK, PAPER.

SO YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY DOESN'T EXIST.

YES, SIR.

I SEE. WELL, GOOD WORK.

...

WHY DON'T YOU TAKE SOME TIME OFF? SHE'S BEEN MISSING YOU, YOU KNOW.

THANKS. I'LL TAKE YOU UP ON THAT OFFER.

EVERYONE'S ALWAYS SAYING, "DONNIE, DONNIE."

EH, DONNIE ?

BANG

!!!

HE'S DEAD, AND HE'S *STILL* CAUSING TROUBLE FOR ENGLAND.

WHAT A PEST.

...WAS A BIT OF A BACK-STABBER.

DONNIE...

AN AGENT LIKE THAT IS USELESS.

BUT HE WAS CONCEALING IT FROM US.

WE KNEW HE'D FOUND IT HERE.

WE DID, HOWEVER, NEED A PAPER MASTER.

SO I PERSONALLY SUPERVISED THE CREATION OF THE NEXT AGENT.

YOMIKO...

...YOU FULFILLED MY EVERY EXPECTATION.

THERE WAS NO DOUBT HE'D FOUND THE BOOK OF TRUTH.

UNGRATEFUL TWIT.

PLINK

...IT MUST BE TIME TO FIND A REPLACEMENT.

SLUK

IF YOU FIND IT SO EASY TO BETRAY ME...

A MASTER OF BOOKS... AND THEIR SLAVE.

MORE POWERFUL... MORE NAÏVE...A GREATER LOVER OF BOOKS...

YOU'VE GOT TO BE JOKING.

HER!

DOOM

IF SOMETHING'S WRONG, WE'LL SOON FIND OUT.

HE AND I HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR A VERY LONG TIME.

RIP

YES, SIR.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO STAY CLOSE TO HIM, YOMIKO.

SHE'S SPENDING LESS TIME WITH DONNIE.

SHE'S SPENDING MORE TIME READING.

YOMIKO READMAN'S MENTAL CONDITION REMAINS UNCHANGED.

THAT MAN DONNIE IS TALKING TO... HE'S AN ENEMY AGENT.

I KNOW. I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT EITHER.

SOMETHING'S GOT TO BE WRONG.

I...I DON'T BELIEVE IT.

IF IT'S TRUE, HE'LL RUN, AND IF IT'S A MISTAKE, HE'LL LIE.

I MUST ASK HIM!

YOMIKO, STOP.

DAK

WE'RE ALREADY LOOKING INTO IT INTERNALLY.

CALM DOWN.

SMAK

BETRAYAL?

DONNIE? HE WOULD NEVER..

HUH?

KILL HIM.

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO WITH DONNIE NAKAJIMA?

HIS DEATH WARRANT.

BUT BEFORE I DO THAT, LET'S GIVE HIM ONE LAST MISSION.

WE'VE INVESTED SO MUCH TIME AND MONEY IN HIM.

MISSION ?

I WILL NOT LET HIM HAND ALL HE'S LEARNED TO THE ENEMY.

I WILL HAVE HIM CULTIVATE THE NEXT, MORE POWERFUL PAPER MASTER.

HE'S THE ONLY PERSON TO WHOM SHE HAS OPENED HER HEART...

THE ONLY PERSON SHE TALKS TO INFORMALLY IS DONNIE.

ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT APPLIES TO YOMIKO READ-MAN?

IT'S A CLASSIC CASE OF SELF-PRESERVATION THROUGH ESCAPISM.

SHE'S AFRAID TO FACE THE PROBLEM.

IT'S COMMON AMONG WOMEN WHO ARE INEXPERIENCED IN SOCIAL RELATION-SHIPS.

...JUST LIKE WHEN SHE'S READING A BOOK.

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT SHE'S SEEING HIM BUT REFUSES TO INVOLVE HERSELF.

THE QUESTION IS, WHY WON'T SHE FACE DONNIE?

FOR ALL THE BOOKS SHE READS, SHE CERTAINLY IS THICK.

HMPH.

HAS HE CONTACTED YOU?

WE'VE HAD NO CONTACT FOR TWENTY HOURS.

BUT HE MIGHT WANT TO LIFT SOME-THING.

SHAA

YES, I KNOW.

DONNIE WOULDN'T ...

WHEN WE WERE INVESTIGATING A BREAK-IN AT THE MAIN BOOK VAULT...WE FOUND HIM.

NO...

Y... YES, SIR.

...AND FOR HIS OWN GOOD.

YOU MUST FIND HIM, AS A FELLOW AGENT OF THE LIBRARY OF ENGLAND ...

YOU MUST FIND DONNI

YOU CARRY THEM EFFORT-LESSLY.

TWO THINGS EXIST INSIDE YOU: DONNIE AND BOOKS.

...AND DEEPLY.

SILENTLY ..

BUT... YOU TOLD ME...

THEN A LONG PERIOD OF DARKNESS STARTED.

THAT WAS YOU ...

...YOMIKO READMAN.

...

WHERE'RE YOUR THUGS?

WHY SUCH AN ELABORATE SCHEME?

IF YOU WANT TO KILL GENTLEMAN, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

!!

LIKE MISSING ONE OF OUR BOOKS.

AH, DONNIE ...

...I'M ALREADY STARTING TO MISS YOU.

...I'VE OFTEN THOUGHT THAT..

I MUST SAY ...

JOKER!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

YOU'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH.

TAK

YOUR PRECIOUS PROTÉGÉ IS LOOKING FOR YOU...

TAK

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

SHF

TAK

...DONNIE.

OUR ESPIONAGE ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES FOR CENTURIES.

YOU SHOULD NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE US.

...

WHAT DO YOU HAVE UP YOUR SLEEVE, JOKER?

TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE BOOKS, THAT IS.

...PAGE BY PAGE.

GRP

MY STORY MUST KEEP GROWING...

MY HAPPY ENDING IS STILL MANY PAGES AWAY.

SO YOU SEE MY DILEMMA.

I CAN'T JUST LET IT END.

IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS.

...

DON'T YOU AGREE, DONNIE?

I WANT ...

...MY OWN STORY.

...A PERSON'S LIFE IS A STORY.

PEOPLE WANT TO FILL THEIR BELLIES.

WANT TO BUY BETTER CLOTHES.

WANT TO BE STRONGER.

IT'S ALWAYS ... ...MORE, MORE.

WE START WITH NOTHING.

...IT CAME TO ME.

ONE DAY, WHILE I WAS WONDERING WHAT IT IS THAT I WANT...

IF YOU CAN'T LIVE FOR YOURSELF, FOR YOUR FRIENDS...

...FOR THE WOMAN YOU LOVE...HOW CAN YOU CALL YOURSELF HUMAN?

SMACK

KRASH

JOKER ...

WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO RUIN THE STORYLINE?

ISN'T THAT HOW IT SHOULD BE?

A BOOK CONTAINS EVERY-THING.

ALL YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS.

IF THAT WERE SO, WE'D JUST BE SLAVES TO BOOKS.

BOOKS AREN'T MEANT TO HELP PEOPLE RUN FROM REALITY.

...SO WE CAN BE EQUAL TO THE GREAT BOOKS.

WE LIVE THE BEST LIVES WE CAN...

THAT'S THE SAME FACE DONNIE MADE...

...WHEN HE HEARD WHAT WAS TO BE HIS FINAL MISSION.

...TO GENERATE NEW BLOOD.

OLD FLESH MUST BE EATEN ...

DONNIE NAKAJIMA.

B-DUMP

B-DUMP

B-DUMP

DOOM

INSECTS HAVE NO FEELINGS.

NO PATHOS, NO FREEDOM, NO LOVE.

THE DEATH OF AN INSECT IS NOTHING.

CAN YOU BELIEVE HIM?

HUMAN ?

HE'S AN INSECT WHO ONLY LIVES FOR BOOKS.

JOKER!

YES, THAT'S IT!

HUFF

HUFF

UGH!

DONNIE ...

SHUK

WHERE ARE YOU?

!

HUFF

EPISODE SIX

YOU MUST LET THE NEW PAPER KILL YOU.

TOK

TOK

TOK

DONNIE.

EPISODE SIX

THIS IS WRONG... IT'S WRONG.

TAK TAK TAK

EEK!

HFF HFF HFF

DONNIE...

BLAM

DONNIE, WHERE WERE YOU?

YOU MUST COME WITH--

BAM

!!?

SHOOM

AAAH!

SH-U-K

TOK

SAY SOME-THING !!!

TOK !!

SHING

AAAH!

FIRE! EVACUATE THE STAFF!

HURRY !!

SH-O-O-M

THEY... THEY MAY HAVE NO ESCAPE.

WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN THE ANNEX BUILDING?

WHY WON'T YOU SAY ANYTHING?

THE BOOKS ...

IT CAN'T BE ...

...HEAR THEM?

CAN'T YOU...

...HEAR THEM ANYMORE ?

CAN'T YOU...

THE HEAT... THE PAIN...

AAAAA

THE BOOKS... CRYING OUT...

DONNIE ...

DOOM

KRONCH

DONNIE!!!

!!!

NO!!!
NO!!!

HUH?

DONNIE ...

DONNIE ?

WAA...

AH...

HIC...

AAAAHHH

OOO

SHP

I... I...

DONNIE !!!

OH, NO! I...

PIP

WHY? WHY DID YOU...

HEH

!!

WHA...

SHK

NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO COMPLETE HIS FINAL MISSION.

OPEN THE BOOK OF TRUTH.

PAPER.

IN THE END, YOU CHOOSE BOOKS OVER PEOPLE.

YOU WILL BECAUSE YOU ARE WHO YOU ARE.

DONNIE GAVE HIS LIFE TO PROTECT THAT BOOK.

!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I LIKE YOU SO MUCH.

WHY WOULD I OPEN IT FOR YOU?

HE GAVE YOU AN EVEN STRONGER ATTACHMENT TO BOOKS.

HE PASSED HIS SKILLS ON TO YOU, AS HIS FINAL ACT OF AFFECTION.

YOUR MASTERY SURPASSED DONNIE'S.

...AM I REALLY THE ONE TORTURING YOU?

IF YOU CONSIDER THESE TWO CRIMES...

JOKER...

ASSHOLE...

SUMI-REGAWA!

I'M SURE YOU SEE THE SITUATION. IT'S YOUR DECISION WHETHER SHE LIVES OR DIES.

WHO

HOWEVER, I WAS PREPARED FOR THIS RESPONSE.

COULD YOU LIVE WITH THAT?

YOU LOST YOUR BELOVED MAN. NEXT YOU WILL LOSE YOUR BELOVED AUTHOR.

HMM!

...

LIAR.. THAT'S WHAT *YOU* WANT...

READ AND, LIKE GENTLEMAN, YOU WILL LIVE FOR ALL ETERNITY.

JUST READ THE BOOK.

YOU CAN MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY.

SH U K

WAK

VMM

UGH!

FORGIVE ME!!!

DIE

READ

YOU CAN READ ALL THE BOOKS YOU WANT, UNTIL THE LAST DAY OF THE UNIVERSE.

OR ARE YOU CONTENT TO DIE IN 50 YEARS, WITH SO MANY BOOKS LEFT UNREAD? WHICH IS IT?

DON'T YOU WANT TO READ ALL THE BOOKS IN EXISTENCE?

ALL BOOKS HAVE AN ENDING.

THAT IS WHY, AT THE END OF A STORY, A PERSON FEELS SUCH SATISFACTION, SUCH EMOTION.

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'VE BEEN PASSING YOUR DAYS, BUT I'M SURE THAT YOU HAVE NO REGRETS.

I NEARLY LOST MY LIFE MAKING IT HERE.

THE WISDOM IS SUPREME, BUT, EVEN MORE, ITS KARMA IS ETERNAL.

THE BOOK OF TRUTH'S POWER LASTS FOR ALL ETERNITY.

YOMIKO, I TRULY BELIEVE THIS.

DONNIE NAKAJIMA

!!!

SHF

YOMIKO...

YOU'VE FINALLY MADE IT THIS FAR.

THIS IS MY FINAL LETTER TO YOU.

TO KEEP MY PROMISE TO EVERY-ONE...

TO FULFILL DONNIE'S LAST WISH...

...?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

JOKER!

I MADE A PROMISE.

I PROMISED TO SAVE EVERYONE AT THIS SCHOOL.

PLEASE NEVER FORGET THAT I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU.

WHEN I SEE YOU, I WANT TO BE WITH YOU, TO PROTECT YOU.

KNOWING A WOMAN LIKE YOU AND A FRIEND LIKE RIDLEY GIVES ME PROFOUND HAPPINESS.

DONNIE...

THOSE FEELINGS HAVE NO SHAPE, BUT THEY REMAIN FOREVER IN YOUR SPIRIT.

THIS IS TRUE FOR HUMANS, TOO.

FINAL EPISODE

GR

RM

HEY!

HARADA !!

GOOD WORK.

THANK GOD YOU'RE SAFE!

WHERE ARE THE OTHER STUDENTS ?

THEY MADE IT OFF CAMPUS.

HARADA !!

THIS TIME, WE HELD OUR OWN.

WE'D BETTER NOT HANG AROUND HERE.

I'M GOING TO BRING YOU DOWN !!!

FINAL EPISODE

TEACHER
...

CHAK
CHAK
CHAK
!
CHAK
BA
M
FROOSH
WHAT THE...
SHLOOM
KLIK
STANDING THERE ALONE ...
...DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE THE UPPER HAND?
I WILL NEVER DOUBT AGAIN.
SO I CAN'T LOSE TO COWARDS LIKE YOU.
YOU SEEM TO HAVE LOST YOUR MANNERS.
CHAK
CHAK
CHAK
CHAK

ANYBODY MOVES AND I START SHOOTING!

STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE!

NENENE!!

WENDY, GET THE HOSTAGE!

TOK

YES, SIR!

YUP

I'M GOING ...

HURRY UP!

TNK

AH.

HM.

AAAA

I'M CALLING MORE TROOPS!

SETTLE DOWN!

TMP TMP

WHAT A SHAME!

SHK SHK

WOOSH

IF I PUT IT LIKE THIS, IT OUGHT TO WORK.

YES, I SHOULD STILL BE ABLE TO WRITE MY WAY OUT OF THIS.

THEN I CAN COME BACK NEXT...

SKRT

SKRT

DAMN PEN!

CHFF

CHFFF

SHUK

SHUK

WHA-WHA...

OH, NO...

H-HEY ...

POK

WOOSH

TAKKA

TAKKA

WE'RE SITTING DUCKS ...

MR. JOKER, OUR ORDERS!

LET'S SEE... HOW CAN I ALLUDE TO AN APOLOGY HERE?

IT'D HAVE TO HAVE JUST THE RIGHT SPIN.

PAF

THAT'S IT!

MR. JOKER... SIR!

SAITNG

THOSE ARE THE SAME EYES DONNIE HAD!

YOU USE REAL PEOPLE IN *YOUR* BOOK...

...BUT YOU GET TOO CAUGHT UP IN THE STORY.

WHEN THE PLOT DOESN'T GO AS YOU PLANNED, YOU FORGET WHO AND WHAT YOU ARE.

SH'K

LET ME GOUGE THEM OUT FOR YOU.

I DON'T LIKE THAT LOOK IN YOUR EYES.

GUSH

BANG BANG

TOK

!!?

YOU'RE A SLAVE TO BOOKS.

YOUR TRUE SELF IS FINALLY REVEALED.

RIDLEY, YOU BASTARD ...

JOKER

UGH...

...PAIN.

NOW YOU'LL KNOW OUR ...

GASH

RIDLEY !!!

UGH

I'M A FOOL.

RIDLEY !!!

PLIP

PLIP

I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT DONNIE WANTED, BUT I'VE RUINED...

HUSH!

...

MY HANDS ...

MY HANDS TO HOLD ...

SIR !!!

I'M...

YOMIKO...

GSH

GAH

UGH... ARGH...

I CAN'T HOLD ANYTHING !!! I CAN'T *READ* ANYTHING !!!

YOU MUST KEEP IT ALIVE.

YOU'RE THE PAPER.

KRAK KRAK KRAK

DONNIE'S SPIRIT IS IN YOU...

KRAK KRA

KLAK

YOMIKO !!

I WAS BORN ALONE... I'LL DIE ALONE.

AS IT SHOULD BE.

GUSH.

C... COLD...

IT'S TOO LATE TO APOLOGIZE.

KRAKKA

YOMIKO, HURRY! IT'S COMING DOWN!

GET OUT NOW OR YOU'LL BE SQUASHED !!

COME ON, RIDLEY.

HUH!

WAP

GO!

I'LL TAKE THE BOOK OF TRUTH.

I'M NOT...

GR

R

!!!

BUT YOU HELPED ME, TOO.

I KNOW.

I USED YOU...

BUT... WHY?

...!!

I'LL BE WITH YOU ALWAYS.

WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREVER NOW.

OH...

YOU'VE FINALLY CROSSED OVER.

AAH...

TEACHER.

IRAKA...

TEACHER !!!

WHAT IS IT?

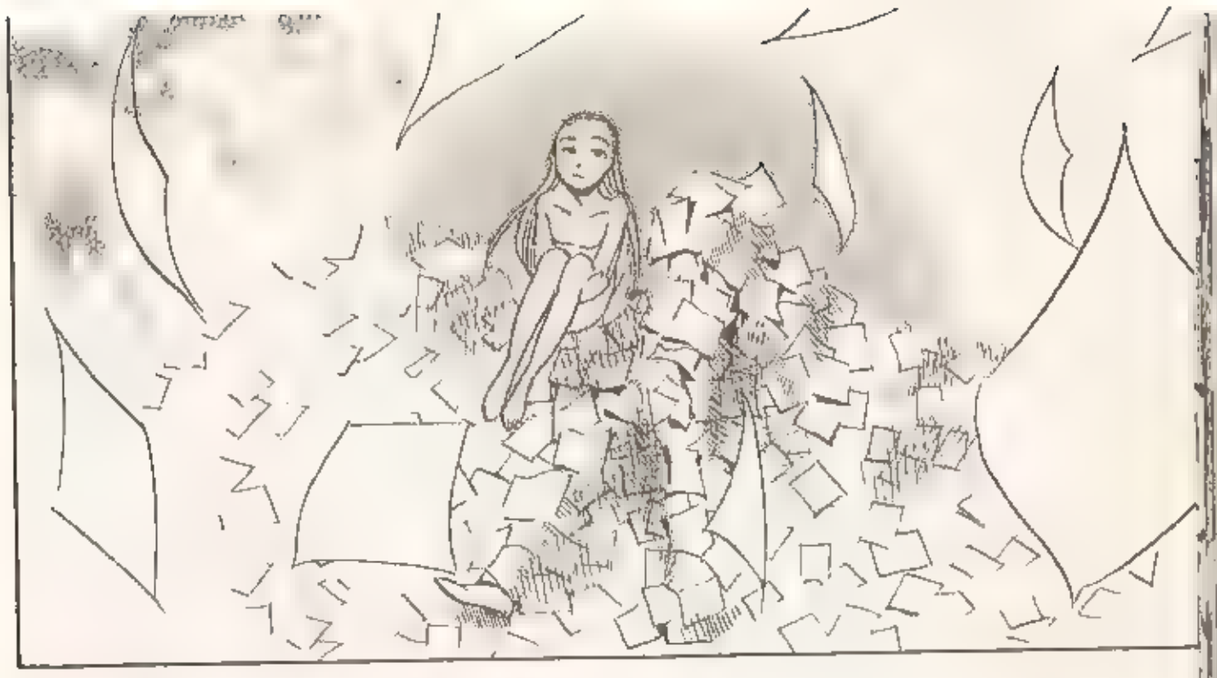
SHUN

NOT AGAIN ...

YOMIKO!

WHY DOES SHE ALWAYS INSIST ON DOING IT ALONE?

SHE CAN'T DO IT ALONE...



OKAY, DRAKE! I GET THE MESSAGE!

...

KRK

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!!

KRASH

SHE'S NOT HERE.

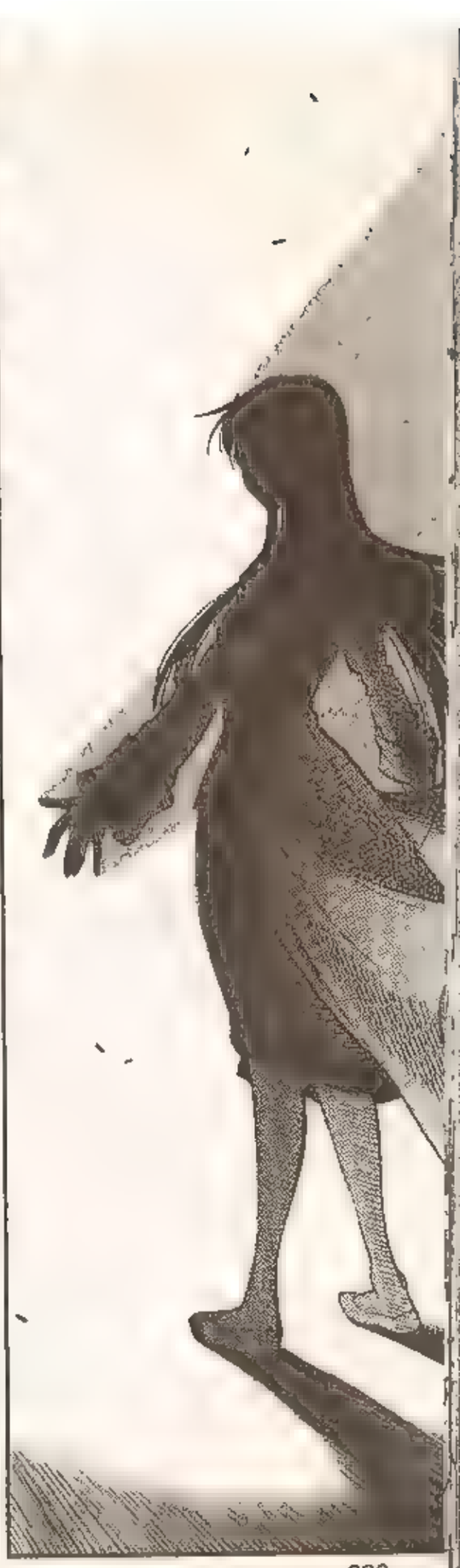
RUN IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE!!

KRK

KRK

KRK

WHERE IS SHE?



...AND SO HAD YOMIKO.

THE LIBRARY HAD DISAPPEARED ...

SEASONS PASSED.

PURE WHITE PAPER BLANKETED EVERYTHING.

THAT DAY...

WHEN THE LAST SHEET SETTLED, ALL WAS CALM.

EVERYONE WAS SAFE.

IT WAS AS IF NOTHING HAD EVER HAPPENED.

...PAPER FELL LIKE SNOW ALL OVER THE WORLD.

WENDY?

WHO ELSE?

SORRY, I HAVEN'T PREPARED YET.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT.

IT'S TIME FOR YOUR MEETING.

RIGHT, DRAKE? ♡

PA

H

GIMME A BREAK!

LEAVE IT TO US...YOUR ACE MANAGER AND SUPERHUMAN BODYGUARD!

WE'VE GOTTA GO!

WENDY! STOP YANKIN' ME!

DAK

DAK

OH, NO! LOOK AT THE TIME!

EVERYONE RETURNED TO THEIR DAILY LIVES.

NENENE!

WE DID, TOO...

R.O.D

NENENE SUMIREGAWA

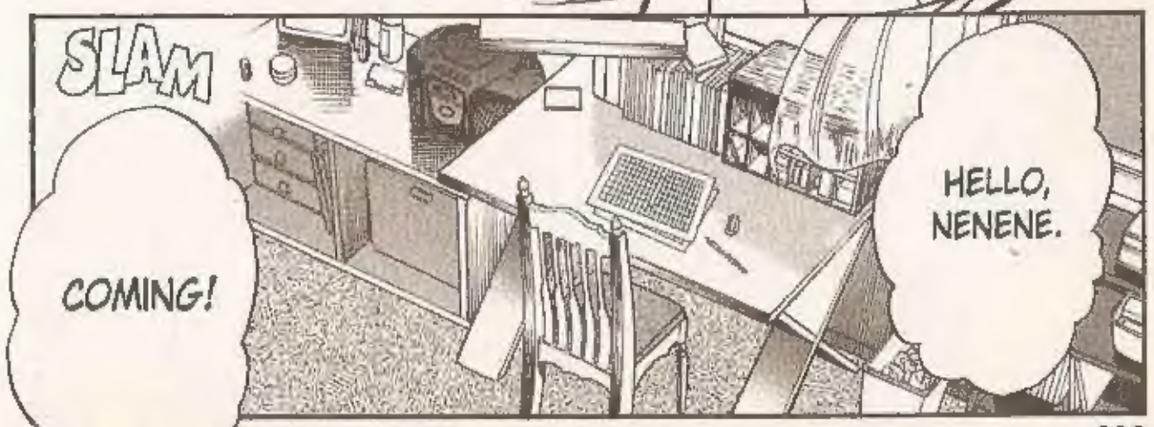
THEY GOT OUT OF THE CAR AND WALKED TO

IT NEEDS A GOOD ENDING.

IT'S STILL WAY TOO SHORT.

NOMO.

TAKAGI



SURE. THANKS.

THEY'RE JUST MAGAZINES. IS THAT OK?

READ OR DIE

HELLO ?

YOMIKO !!

IS SOMETHING WRONG?

...

UH, SORRY. NO.

I...

HEE HEE.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? AREN'T YOU HUNGRY?

THE LAST LITERATURE D-LINE OF U.K.
AGENT YOMIKO READMAN
"THE PAPER"

I'M FINE. DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO READ? A BOOK?

STORY HIDEYUKI KURATA

HERE'S SOME STUFF.

A BOOK ?

COMIC SHUTARO YAMADA

ROD
READ OR DIE

Ridley, you're a Gundam.

I wanted to see Nenene mix more with the students, like in a bath scene.

Should've played more with Fire Inc.

Wendy is easy to draw.

Thanks for your hard work, Yomiko.

Sadako

What the heck are you?

Two of the students.

みなさんありがとう。

Thank you, everyone!

I LOVE BOOKS.

All: Ha ha ha...
Kurata: Well, I guess we're finally at the end of **R.O.D.**, which means that my job is over.
Yamada: What are you talking about? You must be working on other projects.
Kurata: Yes, but once you know such luxury, it's hard to let go. I'm afraid of losing it all again.
Yamada: Is being able to buy a 65-inch TV your idea of total luxury?
Kurata: Yes! This TV is why **R.O.D.** will always be precious to me. If you want to tease me about it, go ahead! I'm ready!
Editor: What do you two have planned from now on?
Yamada: I'm going to give my skills a test.
Kurata: I'm thinking of doing an **R.O.D.** [redacted].
Yamada: Really? Are you serious?
Editor: The novelized **R.O.D.** story will go on.
Kurata: The next volume of the novelized [redacted] will become a [redacted].
Yamada: Oh, really?
Kurata: In the [redacted] **R.O.D.**, Yomiko will be [redacted], and the theme will be [redacted].
Editor: Wow.
Kurata: C'mon. You know that. Stop playing dumb.
Editor: Am I?
So, in conclusion...
Editor: Last words?
Yamada: It's been fun.
Kurata: I'd like to give my heartfelt thanks to the readers and everyone who helped with the project.
Kurata, Yamada: Thanks to everyone.
All: Okay, done, finished.

Editor: A lot of work did go into making the *tankobon*. Kurata, you really tend to concentrate on odd points.
Yamada: You're talking about the front cover of the book itself, not the jacket.
Kurata: Yeah. After Volume 3, I realized that very few people had seen the front covers. The first volume had a takeoff on **Kochikame**, the second was **Fist of the North Star**, and the third was **Dr. Slump**.[5] If someone hasn't seen them yet, please check them out.
Yamada: Hey, did you get permission for us to do this?
Editor: You bet. From the original artists.
Yamada: The original artists?
Editor: Yes, directly from Akimoto, Hara and Toriyama themselves. I made the ***Shonen Jump*** editor stay up all night working on it.[6]
Kurata: Really? I caused a lot of work for you. Sorry 'bout that.
Yamada: Kurata really made you run around to fulfill his whims.
Editor: You two are too much alike.
Kurata: Designer Jinguji did a great job.
Yamada: He did. He's a very precise artist. He carefully redid the titles for each volume.
Editor: **R.O.D.** truly comes from the work of many people. They deserve appreciation.
Kurata: I'm very pleased with everyone's work.
It's actually a sign of respect to *Azumanga*.
Yamada: This isn't really about the hardness of the work, but I must say that Drake was really hard to draw.
Kurata: Really?
Yamada: Uon's rough draft of Drake looked older than Harada's version.
Kurata, Editor: Ha ha...
Kurata: Say, were there any specific models for the various classmates?
Yamada: Eiko was one...and Chiyo was another.
Kurata, Editor: Chiyo?
Kurata: You mean Chiyo from **Azumanga**[7]?
Yamada: Yes, the pigtails are an homage to her.
Kurata: Really? I didn't know that.
Yamada: I thought it could capture a bit of **Azumanga**'s popularity.
Editor: Let's talk about that another time.
R.O.D. forever! A precious memory!
Kurata: So you've recently become a man.
Yamada: *What?*
Kurata: I mean, to go back to what we were saying earlier, you've finally got a little money and can live with some comfort.
Yamada: And...your point?
Kurata: You can now go to a *yakiniku* restaurant[8] alone.
Editor: What does that mean?
Yamada: I get it. You mean that being able to eat your fill at a yakiniku restaurant shows you've become an adult.
Kurata: But still not adult enough to eat at a sushi shop.

1. Manga cafes: coffee shops that offer a selection of manga for people to read while they drink.
2. Koike Eiko: Japanese actress and model.
3. *Tankobon*: a pocket-size book of manga, not unlike the copy of **R.O.D.** you're holding now (but a little smaller).
4. *Tankobon* frequently come wrapped in a book band, a strip of paper with sales blurbs printed on it.
5. As was mentioned in the notes for **R.O.D.** Volume 3, the Japanese editions included bonus cover illustrations parodying well-known manga.
6. The manga parodied in the **R.O.D.** cover illustrations originally appeared in Japan's ***Shonen Jump*** magazine.
7. **Azumanga** is short for **Azumanga Daioh!**, by Kiyohiko Azuma, a comic strip about a group of schoolgirls.
8. *Yakiniku* restaurants serve grilled beef, cooked at the table Korean-style. As at sushi restaurants, you can keep ordering food as you go, and eating your fill often gets expensive.

Yamada: I no longer have to check my wallet to see if I have enough cash to shop at a convenience store. I even started buying books for reference instead of having to read them at manga cafes or bookstores.
Editor: Convenience store! Oh, Yamada...
Kurata: I could say I got **that** from doing **R.O.D.** *(points to the jumbo TV that takes up most of the room)*
Kurata: The royalties from the books just about paid for it.
Yamada: C'mon, you gotta have...Oh, nothing.
Kurata: What's that? What're you trying to say?
Yamada: How many TVs do you have?
Kurata: About five.
Yamada: And DVD players?
Kurata: Oh, nine.
Yamada, Editor: Yup. He's nuts.
Editor: Yamada, you got yourself a cute girlfriend with lovely round eyes while you were making **R.O.D.**
Yamada: Yeah, right. What a cutie! You can't help but fall for those eyes.
Kurata: Eh? You really think she's cute?
Yamada: How rude! Listen to this guy! One time, I brought my girl to his house to meet him, and he stepped on her and wouldn't let go!
Editor: You made her wiggle.
Kurata: You should drown a beast like her, then post pictures on the Internet.
Yamada: I'm never going to invite you to my house again.
Kurata: Uh, people who don't know what we're talking about might get the wrong impression.
Editor: Why not let the gossip fly? Kurata stomped on Yamada's girlfriend!
Kurata, Yamada: Okay, that's enough.
The R.O.D. tankobon[3] would never have come out without permission from *Shonen Jump*!
Editor: Shall we go the standard course and hear about some of the hardships of production?
Yamada: Geez, you always just lay it out there, don't you?
Kurata: Of course it was hard, but it was satisfying work. We started by getting together at coffee shops about once a month, but then we switched to calling each other all the time.
Yamada: We were on the phone for about four hours each month.
Kurata: We were constantly going over tiny points, like whether a line of dialogue should end with "!?" or "!!"
Editor: Wow. I didn't know you went into such detail.
Kurata, Yamada: That's because you didn't do any work!
Editor: Yeah, that's what everyone says, but I still had plenty to do. Every single month, I had to rearrange the deadlines. Always at the last minute...
Yamada: That was my fault. Sorry 'bout that. I won't give you a hard time anymore...
Kurata: The hardest part may have been coming up with the blurbs for the *tankobon* book band[4] and the front cover images.

ULTRA ULTRA READER KING YOMIKO

WE'RE PITTING R.O.D. ORIGINAL CREATOR HIDEYUKI KURATA AGAINST ILLUSTRATOR SHUTARO YAMADA!
HIDEYUKI KURATA VS. SHUTARO YAMADA! PARTICIPANTS: HIDEYUKI KURATA, SHUTARO YAMADA HOST: MANAGING EDITOR

This is the final meeting of the *R.O.D.* manga team at Kurata's home.

Yamada: Holy cow! Look at all the books!
Editor: It's like a manga cafe.[1]
Kurata: Eh, it's not that many...
The Kurata castle. The rumors were true: it's jammed full of books, a veritable warehouse. Yamada and the Editor start picking through the inventory.
Yamada: Look at all the porn!
Kurata: Not that much! Not any more than usual!
Editor: Kurata, I feel like I've been stabbed in the back.
Kurata: Why's that?
Editor: What's with this Koike Eiko calendar[2]? Shouldn't you have anime posters? I know you must have the life-size **R.O.D.** shop poster.
Kurata: Who says I have to put it up? That's enough, now. Let's start the interview.
Yamada: Where're the smutty fanzines?
Kurata: Okay, okay! Cut it out, guys!
Yamada is mesmerized by Kurata's 65-inch TV.
Editor: So, has everything gotten back to normal after **R.O.D.**?
Kurata: We worked on it for about two and a half years.
Yamada: Yet it still seems to have gone by so quickly.
Editor: While working on this project, did either of you gain anything as creators?
Kurata: For one thing, I moved. How's that?
Yamada: I guess my life has gotten a little easier.
Kurata: Yeah, you could say that. Now I live in a place with a separate toilet and bath. Before, I was in a wooden building that was leaning to one side. If you put an empty can on the floor, it would roll away, like in a room on the Titanic.